

The BRITISH NAVY

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THE world is still ruled and peace is sought to be preserved by organized force, and the enormous armies mobilized at the moment for war indicate the price demanded for the defence of national integrity. More than twenty millions of the world's young manhood are trained and held ready for war, the war that always threatens, and the world's fleets include thirty-five hundred vessels of varying size, energy and potentialities of destruction.

Despite the variant views of experts, the battle ship is still the arbiter of the sea. More dreadnoughts than submarines are being built, and yet from twenty to thirty submarines can be obtained for the price of one dreadnought. These great units of naval warfare cost from \$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000 each, battle ships and battle cruisers alike, and cruisers from \$1,500,000 to \$2,500,000.

Great Britain's present navy is the greatest aggregation of sea strength the world has ever known, though relatively it is not so large as when its standard of sea power was at least a certain superiority to the navies of any two other nations combined. When the present war broke out Germany's navy was assumed to have sixty per cent of the strength possessed by that of Great Britain—though in this some factors, notably that of relative gun power, were overestimated. As proof of this here is an official enumeration of the latest main batteries:

"The heaviest guns mounted in the British navy are 13.5 inch, firing a projectile of 1,250 pounds. There are 24 of them in the fleets in home waters—100 in battle ships and 24 in battle cruisers. The heaviest guns mounted in the German navy are 12-inch, firing a projectile of 850 pounds. There are 88 of them in completed ships, all battle ships, the battle cruisers having only 11-inch guns."

The main dependence of the British empire is its sea power, and this exists for one main purpose—"command of the sea in war." This once secured—that is, its particular enemy or enemies being sealed in home ports or shorn of sea power—the navy can easily protect British commerce, keep open the lines of communication between the different sections of the empire and prevent invasion of British territory.

Great Britain's Sea Power.

What, then, popularly described, is the sea power that Great Britain had at its disposition, when war was declared? And what generally are the character and number of the units assembled in the main fleets, the detached squadrons and divisions? First of all in importance is the battle ship, and this is the outgrowth of proved need. In old days sea fighting was more or less of a haphazard effort, when the individual essay was often the determining factor. But as order was evolved out of chaos in naval tactics, notably in the Dutch wars with England, the practice slowly gathered strength of fighting in a compact or close hauled array, the ships being ranged in line ahead—that is, each succeeding ship following in the wake of the next ahead, so as to give free play to guns carried mainly on the broadside. For purposes of mutual support the ships were disposed as closely to one another, ahead and astern, as was compatible with individual freedom of evolution and manoeuvre. This disposition necessarily involved the exclusion from the line of battle of all vessels below a certain average or standard of fighting ship. Hence the main fighting forces came in time to be composed entirely of "ships fit to lie in a line," or "capital ships," as they were frequently called. Finally these superior craft were known as "line of battle ships," "ships of the line," and at last as "battle ships," as they are known in this era.

But need for other and lighter ships was no less apparent, notably for the collection and transmission of intelligence. Such cruising vessels grew in size and character from fast frigates to cruisers, destroyers and scouts, and finally included modern battle cruisers so heavily armed and armored as to be capable of taking a place on occasion in line of battle. The immediate supports of the torpedo craft that have enough enduring mobility to keep the sea are cruisers disposed at suitable distances in the rear, they in turn being supported by successive cordons or patrols of cruisers

increasing in size and power until we come to the battle fleet, the concentrated nucleus, the moving base of the whole organization.

Some authorities do not favor the battle cruiser, but it has great fighting qualities, can push home a reconnaissance, can hold up the laggards in a chase and thus bring on a desired general action, and, owing to its superior speed, it can be ready as a fast wing of the main fleet and furnish a ready weapon for concentration on an enemy's line where such additional weight might determine victory. The functions of other auxiliary ships are explained by their names, but it must be kept in mind that, other things being equal, the bigger the ship the better it is as an instrumentality of war. Moreover, for tactical reasons it is not expedient to lengthen unduly the line of battle, and here again exists the manifest advantage of concentrating offensive power, as far as may be, in single units.

After all predictions to the contrary, war did not come as a bolt out of the blue either to Great Britain or to Germany. With Great Britain this preparedness is attributable to the fact that the inspection at Portsmouth by the King had left the fleet in a state of satisfactory mobilization, both as to the active forces and to the reserves that had responded to the call. Ships were in fighting condition and crews were available to man them all. Germany was also fortunate in that fully one-third of her active personnel—and these next to petty officers generally included the best trained and most skilled men of her crew—were still on shipboard, as their discharge into the reserve was not due until October next. Supplementing this practically all the German navy except one battle cruiser, two armored cruisers and a few cruisers, gunboats and destroyers, was concentrated in northern waters.

Location of Fleets.

After the inspection at Spithead, the Roads of Portsmouth, the first fleet was concentrated at Portland, the second fleet was in its various home ports, and, thanks to the experimental mobilization of inspection, the ships of the third fleet were manned with surprising smoothness and speed when the second call was made. The first fleet, after completing the consumable stores, slipped out of Portland Harbor and, except for busy rumor and the fact that a German mine layer has been destroyed, that the cruiser Amphion has been sunk by an anchored mine and that a reconnaissance in force to the Bight of Heligoland has been successful, the veil of secrecy shrouding its movements has not been lifted from that day to this. It is known that "the command of the sea" has been established in and around the North Sea, that a number of army corps have been speedily and safely transported to the Continent, that coastwise traffic is proceeding in apparent security and that the highways and byways in sea and overseas are being policed in the interests of commerce.

The German forces have on the other hand taken up the rôle of "a fleet in being" and are probably lying between Wilhelmshaven and Borkum, the mouth of the Elbe and Heligoland, the battle ships, large cruisers and submarines at anchor inshore and the light cruisers and destroyers, aided by air machines, forming an extended screen of watchfulness, scouting and lookout.

Now that the war is well on it may be asked, What has the navy done? This may perhaps be best answered in an extract from an English editorial on the subject:—"No one in England now asks 'What is the navy doing?' Its greatest triumph, worth more to us than many naval battles, is that it has sent the German fleet into port, and, having either captured or driven off the sea all German merchant ships, has given us a feeling of security so deep that some of us can hardly yet realize that we are almost within earshot of the cannon. But for our silent but all-powerful navy we should not to-day have an abundance of food at prices little higher than in peace time, and in many cases actually lower than prices of roughly a decade or two ago. Financial and economic conditions were pretty bad a few days ago. Had our navy not been ready and steady and strong we could not have kept business going. The government, financiers, business men and the public

have worked wonders in a crisis which when it was sprung upon us terrified responsible men, who could see how the whole commercial machinery might collapse, but could not perceive how disaster could be averted."

Well, the navy seems to have averted it. Apparently there has never been any secret about Germany's proposed naval strategy and campaign, in the event of war with Great Britain. The Reichs Marine Amt, or War Staff of the German Admiralty, long ago, when its navy was in the earliest stages of its creation, declared that its plans were based on two assumptions; first, that Great Britain's probable adversary—could be defeated in detail, because its naval forces would be dispersed, or if concentrated the result would be Great Britain's loss of supremacy at sea.

German Admiral's Opinion.

The naval correspondent of a British journal comments on these assumptions as follows:

"The first hypothesis, then, is dispersion. Events have occurred otherwise. Instead of dispersion there is concentration. The second hypothesis is radically unsound. The defeat of the Russian navy by the Japanese navy did not leave Japan in a weakened position in the world."

"Upon the publication of the Navy act of 1900 Admiral von der Goltz, a former Chief of the German Admiralty (War) Staff, wrote an explanatory essay on the subject. He observed that war with England was far from improbable, and that it was the business of Germany to prepare for it. In the event of the British forces being concentrated in home waters Admiral von der Goltz considered that 'numerical inferiority can be compensated by efficiency, by excellence of

material, by the capacity and discipline of the men. Careful preparation permitting rapid mobilization can insure a momentary superiority."

"If the last sentence means anything, it means a surprise attack. When those words were written there was nothing either in international law or in the practice of nations to forbid an attack before declaration of war. (In 1907 the Hague conference decreed that a declaration of war must be made before hostilities; but the signature of Germany to that article did not prevent her from sowing mines before declaration, the other day.)

British Navy Ready First.

"The plan of a surprise attack has also failed. We do not yet know that it was even attempted; probably it was not. What little is known goes to show that the British navy was ready before the German navy."

"Attack in detail or dispersal of forces has failed; surprise has failed. Contrary to German expectation, the British navy is not only concentrated in home waters, but has cruisers to spare for the trade routes. The 'momentary superiority' has not been gained by Germany. What she has achieved is a permanent inferiority. For in the event of a general fleet action in which the British fleet was victorious, though weakened, this country would still have a sufficient navy to hold her own, whereas Germany would have nothing left."

"Her initial assumptions having broken down, Germany has had recourse to the strategy of attempting to reduce the British fleet by destroyer and submarine attacks. Her object is, of course, to sink by these means as many ships of the line as possible. But as that intention is known, it is not likely that the endeavor will succeed. Again, presum-

ably it is her intention gradually to clear the North Sea by destroyer and submarine and mining operations. But in all these branches of warfare this country is numerically superior. Until Germany succeeds in clearing the North Sea her main fleet is inoperative. If she succeeded, her main fleet would be forced to take action against a greatly superior force, to whose interest it is that such action should take place as soon as possible."

German Navy Efficient.

In concluding this summary of British naval strength it will be well to keep in mind that both the British and German navies are in a highly efficient condition and that the officers of each are men of great intelligence, fine skill and most useful experience. The growth of the German navy, its rise from nothing to second place among the sea powers, is phenomenal, and should it go into action with any of its sea enemies it is certain to give a good account of itself. The insistencies of fair play demand that this should be said.

STRENGTH OF THE BRITISH AND THE GERMAN FLEETS.

Effective strength of navy at the moment when war was declared:—
Super-dreadnought battle ships. 10
Super-dreadnought battle cruisers 3
Dreadnought battle ships. 10
Dreadnought battle cruisers. 5
Total dreadnoughts. 28
(Three more super-dreadnoughts are near completion, and are due to commission this year.)
Pre-dreadnoughts—
Powerful ships all completed between 1905 and 1908. 10

Older and less powerful ships completed between 1895 and 1904. 30
Total pre-dreadnoughts. 40
Total battle ships. 68

Armored cruisers—
Big, heavily armed ships, completed between 1905 and 1908. 9
"Gunboat" class, slower and less powerful, completed between 1903 and 1905. 15
Drake and Cressy class, bigger and better, but slightly older ships completed between 1901 and 1903. 10

Total armored cruisers. 34
Cruisers—
Big protected cruisers, Diadem class, 21 knots, 6-inch guns (1890-1902). 6
Older and smaller (1890-1902). 9

Fast light cruisers—
Arethusa class, 3,500 tons, 30 knots, burning oil, completed 1918 year. 8
Town class, 3,400 to 4,800 tons, 25 knots (1910-1914). 15
25-knot ships, about 300 tons (1903-1907). 15

Other classes—
20-knot ships, 2,100 to 3,400 tons (1890-1900). 19
10-knot ships, 5,000 tons (1895-1896). 9
Older ships, 2,500 to 4,200 tons, 16.5 to 19.5 knots (1890-1893). 9

Total protected cruisers. 87
Destroyers, 36 to 25½ knots (1893-1914). 225
Torpedo boats, 26 to 20 knots (1885-1908). 100
Submarines, from 1,600 to 200 tons, speed from 20 to 11½ knots surface, 12 to 7 knots submerged (1904-1913). 75
Mine layers. 7
Repair ships. 8

Not all of these ships are available for service in home waters, but, whether in Europe or at the other side of the world, all are taking part in the struggle for the command of the sea.

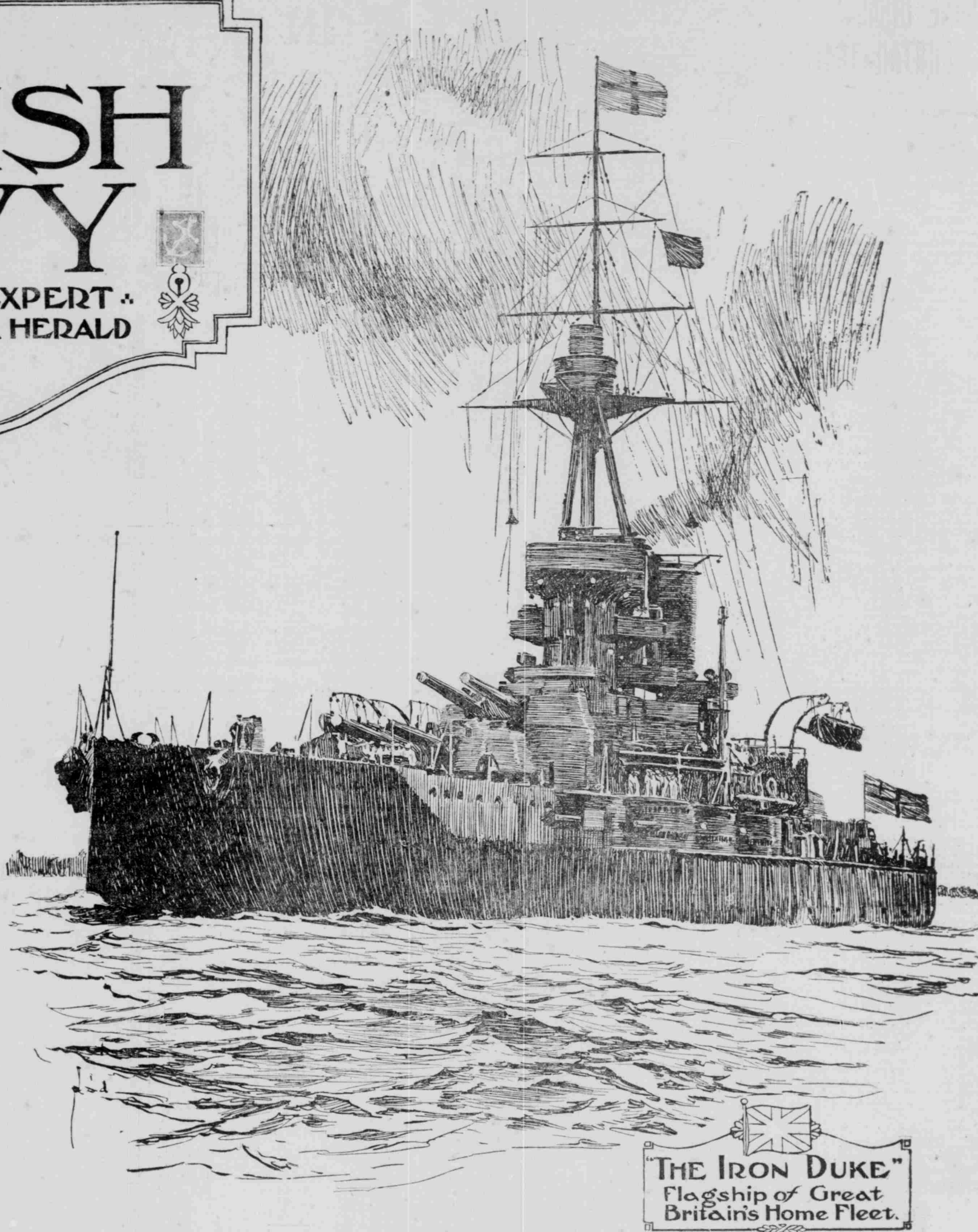
GERMAN FLEET.

Super-dreadnoughts (3 building) — None
Dreadnought battle ships. 13
Dreadnought battle cruisers. 5

(Two other battle ships due to commission this year are probably ready.)
Pre-dreadnought battle ships (1891-1908). 22
Old coast defence battle ships (1889-1893). 8
Armored cruisers (1897-1900), 8,900 to 15,500 tons, 24.5 to 19 knots. 9

Big protected cruisers (1892-1910) 6,000 tons, 19 knots. 6
24 knot cruisers (1904-1913), 3,000 to 5,000 tons. 25

Small cruisers, 21 knots (1903-1910). 12
Destroyers (1889-1913), 34 to 26 knots. 152
Torpedo boats (1887-1898), 26 to 22 knots. 45
Submarines about equal to British in size and speed. 30 to 40
Mine layers. 3



"THE IRON DUKE"
Flagship of Great
Britain's Home Fleet.